

## Claims

I claim:

1. An insulated container assembly comprising:  
5 a first portion and a second portion co-operable therewith;  
said first portion having a soft-sided insulated wall structure and a receptacle  
therein, said receptacle having an opening, and said opening having a land  
adjacent thereto;  
said second portion being movably connected to said first portion;  
10 said second portion including a closure member operable to control access to said  
receptacle;  
said closure member including a stiffened member operable to engage said land in  
an interference fit.
- 15 2. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 wherein said land and said stiffened  
member are co-operable to form a seal.
3. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 wherein said stiffened member  
includes a bead and said bead is engageable with said land.  
20
4. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 wherein said stiffened member is a  
surround, said receptacle is made of a stiffer material than said soft sided wall structure,  
and said land is a region of said receptacle extending about said opening.
- 25 5. The insulated container assembly of claim 4 wherein, when said surround engages  
said land, hoop stresses are developed in at least one of (a) said land; and (b) said  
surround.
6. The insulated container assembly of claim 4 wherein, when said surround engages  
30 said land, a compressive hoop stress is generated in one of (a) said land; and (b) said  
surround, and tensile hoop stresses are generated in the other.
7. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 further comprising a removable  
thermal storage element.  
35

8. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage element is matingly engageable with said second portion.

9. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage element is matingly engageable with said stiffened member of said second portion of said insulated container assembly.

10. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage element is alternately locatable in said second portion of said container assembly and in said first portion of said container assembly.

11. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein, when said closure member is in an open position, and said thermal storage member is engaged in said second portion, said thermal storage member presents a support surface for objects withdrawn from said first portion of said container assembly.

12. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage member includes a flat surface, and said thermal storage member is movable to permit said flat surface to act as a support surface for objects removed from said first portion of said container assembly.

13. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage member includes at least one recess formed therein.

14. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage container has at least one cup-holder recess formed therein.

15. The insulated container assembly of claim 7 wherein said thermal storage container has an internal cavity for containing a thermal storage medium, and said cavity is refillable.

16. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 further comprising a mechanical attachment element operable to secure said second portion in a closed position relative to said first portion.

17. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 further comprising a grip member by which to urge said stiffened member to a disengaged position relative to said land.

18. The insulated container assembly of claim 1 wherein said land and said stiffened member define an engagement interface of said second portion of said container assembly with said first portion of said container assembly, and said interface is zipperless.

19. An insulated, soft-sided container assembly comprising:  
a body assembly and a lid assembly hingedly joined to said body assembly  
said body assembly including a soft-sided outer casing and an internal hard-shell receptacle;  
said receptacle having a mouth;  
said lid including a formed structural member having a periphery for mating engagement with said mouth of said receptacle;  
said structural member being engageable in an interference fit with said mouth of said receptacle.

20. The insulated container assembly of claim 19 wherein said structural member has a deformable bead mounted thereto for contacting said receptacle.

21. The insulated container assembly of claim 19 wherein said receptacle includes a receptacle wall region extending peripherally to define said mouth, and when matingly engaged, said structural member is biased toward said peripherally extending wall region of said receptacle.

22. The insulated container assembly of claim 19 further comprising a removable thermal storage element, said thermal storage element and said structural member of said lid being releasably engageable.

23. The insulated container assembly of claim 22 wherein said thermal storage element is variably positionable within said container assembly.

24. The insulated container assembly of claim 22 wherein said thermal storage element is variably positionable within a set of positions in said container assembly, said

set of positions including at least a first position releasably engaged with said structural member, and a second position seated in said receptacle.

25. The insulated container assembly of claim 22 wherein said receptacle has a bottom wall and said thermal storage element is positionable in a set of positions within said container assembly, said set of positions including (a) a first position releasably engaged with said structural member; (b) a second position nested above said bottom wall; and (c) a third position intermediate said first and second positions.

26. The insulated container assembly of claim 22 further comprising a shelf positionable within said receptacle.

27. The insulated container assembly of claim 26 wherein said thermal storage element is placeable within said receptacle upon said shelf.

28. The insulated container assembly of claim 22 wherein said lid has an outwardly facing surface, and said outwardly facing surface has at least one rebate formed therein for accommodating objects placed on said lid.

29. An insulated soft-sided container assembly, comprising:  
a soft sided insulated wall structure including a base panel, an upstanding sidewall, and a lid, said lid being hingedly mounted to said upstanding sidewall;  
a receptacle mounted within said soft sided wall structure, said receptacle being made from a stiffer material than said soft-sided wall structure;  
said receptacle having a mouth;  
said lid having a stop for said mouth, said stop being made from a stiffer material than said soft-sided wall structure;  
said lid being movable between an open position and a closed position to control access to said receptacle; and  
when said lid is in said closed position, said stop being engaged with said mouth in an interference fit.

30. The insulated soft-sided container assembly of claim 29 wherein said stop includes a moulded surround member having a peripherally outwardly facing surface, said surface having a contact region, and said surround member being resiliently displaceable on engagement with said receptacle.

31. The insulated, soft-sided container assembly of claim 30 wherein said surround includes an inwardly facing peripheral surface, and a releasably engageable thermal storage element is mounted inwardly of said inwardly facing peripheral surface.

5

32. The combination of a thermal storage element and a thermal storage element retention fitting for an insulated container, the container having at least one substantially planar panel, wherein the thermal storage element has a hollow body for containing a thermal storage medium liquid, a port by which to introduce the thermal storage medium liquid into said hollow body, a removable closure member operable to control access to said hollow body, and at least one engagement fitting operable releasably to mate said thermal storage element with said thermal storage retention apparatus; and, said thermal storage retention apparatus being mounted to form at least a portion of the substantially planar panel.

10

15